

## RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

policy of thinly disguised hostility toward the clergy, but it did not succeed in dispersing the Shia organization or in killing the spirit of devotion and fanaticism. As a result, as soon as the old regime collapsed, the clergy raised its head.

Opposed both to Westernism and to Communism, the Shia divines strove, throughout the war, to restore their influence and prestige among the masses. Consequently they waged a campaign against European dress and for the reintroduction of veils for women. They opposed secular education and insisted upon the revival of religious training. In some cases they appealed to the faithful not to read newspapers, which too often represented antireligious or indifferent tendencies. They also worked for the revival of ancient customs such as the ceremonious self-flagellation that had been forbidden by Reza Shah. In this offensive the Shiite hierarchy was generally successful. Step by step it gained new positions or regained old ones.

By and large the government tried to accommodate them. Several official measures may be mentioned in this connection. First of all, Mohammed Sadr, an elder statesman and a former mullah, was appointed Minister of Justice in the Soheily cabinet in 1943 and from that time continued to play an important role in succeeding cabinets throughout the war. In September, 1943, Sadr was appointed administrator of the great Sepah Salar mosque in Teheran while retaining his ministerial functions. At the same time a Theological Faculty was inaugurated in the same mosque, and it was given the status of a department of Teheran University. This important decision was followed by the granting of official permission to hold a self-

flagellating procession on September 22, the anniversary of the death of Arair-al-Mu'rninin, one of the Shiite martyrs, and a day of national religious mourning. The next step was taken in December of the same year when by government decree a Council of Ten on Religious Studies was formed. The council was composed of various government and Court dignitaries. The protection that the government bestowed on religion was well illustrated by an incident that took place toward the end of 1943. An Iranian pilgrim went to Mecca to prostrate himself before the Holy Temple of Kaaba. Exhausted by the long journey he suddenly became sick in the presence of the devout crowds assembled near the Kaaba. The reaction of the mob